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that impression must vary with the degree of excellence of the beauty perceived by the senses; and as long as we are not informed what is the most beautiful, a pleasurable impression of inferior degree may be taken as the ultimatum of the attainable in that direction. Hence, the soundest and acutest natural taste must fail in the absence of proper education. Then again, objects beautiful in themselves are not necessarily beautiful in connection with other objects. For instance, a gold ring ever so beautiful will become hideously ugly in connection with the nose or ear of a woman; and yet we all know that nose rings are greatly admired by men we call savages, and earrings by men whom we term civilized beings. Thus habit has ruthlessly perverted much of what may otherwise have merit as natural taste.

Natural taste is insufficient for another reason, which is, *that* in order to appreciate the beautiful in architectural monuments (and when I speak of a monument I mean any building of sufficient pretension to express an idea, be it that of religion, of a place of business, of political import, or a manufacturing establishment), it is necessary to possess sufficient education to be conversant with the idea itself represented by it. It will not be thought impertinent to doubt the general information of the public in that direction, when we see professional architects composing common warehouses of the odds and ends of the Parthenon and Coliseum, seasoned with choice bits of mediæval churches and palaces of the time of the renaissance.

The second prejudice is that, "The laws of architecture are to be found in precedent only, and not in nature."

This error needs no other refutation than the obvious reflection that architects at some time must have labored without precedent to guide them.

The third error is that, "Architecture is a science of proportion, which proportions are arrived at by mathematical calculation."

We may as well think of composing music by a calculus, or computing a smile or a frown by a ready-reckoner.

Blackstone defines Law as the essence of reason. I claim precisely the same definition for the laws of beauty in general, and will attempt to prove them such, as far as they pertain to beauty in architecture.

Weak amateurs and the pretending professional artist have preached the convenient doctrine that art is a matter of taste, and taste a gift of nature; this enables them to establish themselves as despotic authorities, from whose decision there is no

appeal—oracles gifted with a semi-divine knowledge and an infallible judgment, which cannot be called to account for its assertions. Others again, innocent in their ignorance, have maintained that architectural art is a matter of purely scientific demonstration—of proportions either handed down to us by time-honored antiquity or to be established by arithmetical calculations. It is needless to prove that neither personal caprice nor mathematical calculations can justly govern in matters of art.

The *law* of beauty in art is a science demonstrable by sound logical reasoning, of which reasoning nature is to form the premises. The execution of those laws in practice is a matter of individual ability and cumulative progress. It is self-evident that nature is the source from which we must draw in producing our works of art. If this beautiful creation of God, our Maker, does not contain and express everything that is beautiful and elevating, it were vain for man to try to invent it.

(To be continued.)

## Foreign Correspondence, Items, etc.

ENGLAND.—At the fire which occurred at Blenheim Palace in February last it is said a number of pictures by Titian were destroyed. From various accounts of the event we should judge the loss to art was not very great, as the best authorities say the pictures were not by Titian, and not even beautiful. The subjects of these pictures were, the Loves of Mars and Venus, Cupid and Psyche, Apollo and Daphne, Pluto and Proserpine, Hercules and Dejanira, Vulcan and Ceres, Bacchus and Ariadne, Jupiter, Juno, and Io, Neptune and Amphitrite. The only real loss was a picture by Rubens, the Rape of Proserpine, (8 feet 8 inches high by 2 feet 1 inch wide), and this is irreparable. Nothing remains of this work but engravings. The Blenheim collection contains many fine specimens of Flemish and Italian Art, but fortunately none of these were in the room destroyed. An English paper says:

In one of the recesses behind the leather hangings, the following inscription, it is said, has become apparent:

"These pictures were put up September 10, 1796, by G. Austin, jun., Clerk of Bladon—a rogue—Josh. Ward, a member for fishing . . . . Hubbard, a deer-stealer.

"WILLIAM HOA . . . , Stonesfield, a Poacher."

LONDON, February 9th, 1861.

Dear Crayon:

I believe you saw the sun, and perhaps felt his beams too, last summer, which is more than we can say here; for it was without exception the most dismal season I ever remember to have seen—almost incessant rain, and, when not raining a dense mantle of cloud over our heads. I suppose that this ungenial season will have some effect on the landscape exhibitions this spring, for it has been serious work for artists who are wont to work out of doors. In the item of skies, however, th

may be some finer results than usual, for at times we had compensation for the ungenial weather in the display of magnificent effects of cloud and storm. I hear of one adventurous artist who went out resolutely every day with a portable tent, a small stove, a kettle, a bottle of whisky and cigars in proportion, by aid whereof he was enabled to sustain the inclemency of the skies and to keep his fingers in working order.

There are two exhibitions of Photographs now open. "*The Photographic*" and the "*Architectural Photographic*." I like the display as a whole. One of the most remarkable works is a very large copy from Guido's *Aurora*; it is much finer than any engraving I have ever seen of this work, and gives the spirit and feeling of the picture far more completely. The best subjects, as usual, are architectural ones, for which photography is peculiarly well adapted; and there are a few, *too few*, exquisite bits of weedy bank which render intricate and beautiful detail with a degree of accuracy quite unapproachable by the hand of man who can at best but indicate and suggest what he sees in such subjects. One thing, however, is very observable, that our Pre-Raphaelites (as I suppose they still call themselves) who put themselves in competition with nature and of course fail miserably in doing so, contrive to miss in great measure the characteristic features of such subjects, and to give more detail in parts than the sun takes notice of when he is employed to transcribe them. Our photographers, unfortunately, care too little for humble subjects of this sort, and still have too great a hankering to do pictures out of doors, which very rarely answers.

There is, (I need not say) a considerable sprinkling of Portraits, a good many *colored* ones, which I pass over, because they are neither painting nor photography properly so called, but a hybrid species of false art, which for the most part embraces the defects of both its parents. I recognize some familiar objects at all exhibitions of this sort—representations of foolish, well-dressed, insipid young gentlemen, who show their muffin faces to the public on all suitable occasions; and representations of the same at all places where there is a peg to hang them on. Are there any of this species in the United States, or is the breed confined to old countries?

The first "*Artist's and Amateur's Conversazione*," took place on the 7th inst, and there was a very good show of portfolios as well as some good pictures, although not so many of the latter as usual. The portfolios are, however, the most interesting part of the exhibition, and give a very fair notion of what our artists and amateurs have been about. The latter are an increasing sect, and some of them are excellent painters. Mr. Ruskin said, sometime since, in one of his booklings, that all amateur's work is entirely worthless as art; but that is not true, and if you meet with such an assertion contradict it lustily, and don't believe a syllable of the libel.

I read last summer a review of one of our galleries, in which it was affirmed that some artist whose picture was very highly commended, was "loyal to the rendering of every leaf, twig, and blade of grass in the background;" this was an enormous "crammer;" for on

close inspection there were in the picture about thirty twigs, a hundred and seventy leaves, and five hundred minute scratches intended for blades of grass; whereas in nature the grass would be reckoned by millions, and the leaves and twigs would require months to count them if any one were foolish enough to want to do so. But to such such a level has a good deal of our criticism come. \* \* \*

The statement in our last number of the demise of Birket Foster is erroneous. The report arose from the decease of Mr. Foster's father.

Picture sales continue and pictures bring good prices. Turner's reputation sustains itself, if the sale of the "*Burning of the Houses of Parliament*" be any test of it, bringing at auction lately the sum of 675 guineas. Maclise's "*Halt of the Bohemian Gipsies*" brought at the same sale 670 guineas.

There is to be an exhibition of the works of the late C. R. Leslie in May next. The Queen, who gave many important commissions to Mr. Leslie, generously contributes whatever is wanted from the Royal Collection.

A friend sends us two extracts from letters written by an American artist respecting *Kaulbach*, which we are sure will be acceptable to our readers. They are as follows:

I recently visited Kaulbach, the great painter, in his monstrous studio. His personal appearance, as he stood before an immense canvas, struck me as the very embodiment of artistic earnestness. He wears, while painting, a broad-brimmed, black felt hat, with the fore-part drawn over his eyes; and thus, with his long-tail coat, he reminded me very strongly of some venerable old Friends I have seen, except that he wears also a broad, heavy, black moustache. His eyes, which are remarkably keen, are buried beneath the heaviest brows I ever saw. He was smoking the stump of a cigar with the aid of a meerschaum mouth-piece, and painting a picture of the battle of Salamis, the foreground figures of which he was laying in brown and warm. This picture is of colossal proportions, like most of Kaulbach's celebrated works, and is truly a sublime production. My visit was not a sociable one, as he continued engaged in conversation with another visitor. He only looked from under his broad hat, and called my attention from the small study in color to the big picture. He did this in a voice which went through me like a meat-hatchet, so sharp, earnest, and to the point. Kaulbach is a great master: especially in the regions of allegory he soars, like an eagle, alone and aloft. He is, I suppose, the most highly intellectual painter, the most philosophic artist living. His pictures require to be studied to be appreciated, and, I think, are unintelligible except to well-cultivated minds. Angels figure extensively in his works, and take part in the main action, like ordinary mortals; and so much is told on his canvas, and so many things done, that his pictures might be called painted epic poems. His drawing and composition are of the highest order, and his pictures strike every beholder with an appalling notion of his great power, while to multitudes they are magnificent enigmas, which can only be solved by

means of a hand-book. The color, if I may be allowed to be critical, is not excellent; but this would not, perhaps, be so much noticed, if Munich did not happen to possess some of the finest specimens of Rubens and Vandyke. I am told, however, that Kaulbach did not paint at all until he was thirty years of age, though whether this be true or not, I am unable to say. It is said he was engaged altogether in drawing and composition up to that time. He is not now an old man, though he has every appearance of one. He has made some remarkably fine illustrations of Shakspeare, which have been engraved; and his illustrations of Reineke Fuchs of Goethe are justly celebrated.

I will here relate a pleasing, and, to me, a very encouraging incident, which occurred while I was at work in the English Garden about two weeks ago. I was one afternoon, about five o'clock, busy on the third sitting, making a study of a couple of beech-stems, when an elderly-looking man with his family approached me from behind, and commenced examining my work. This is so common an occurrence that I took no notice of them, and kept on painting. The old gentleman at first merely called the attention of his little child to the work, but presently said, "Es ist doch sehr brav gemacht und fleiszig behandelt,"\* besides other things very complimentary to my study. He looked at the tree, and then at my work, and then, tapping me on the shoulder, said, "Gut, sehr gut." I turned then instinctively around, took off my cap, and thanked him for the compliment, when lo! it was Wilhelm von Kaulbach. I held my breath when I discovered who it was, when he looked me full in the face, and returned my salutation, and went off. It is needless to add, that I felt relieved when I saw them go off; and, had I known that the great master himself was looking over my shoulder, I should not have painted away with so much confidence. This garden is a great promenade for the folks of Munich; and so many of them stop a few minutes right behind my stool, that I seldom take any notice of them, unless, of course, they venture a remark, as in the above instance, which I shall long remember. I sometimes have interesting conversations in this way; and I never fail to interest my chance visitors with the information that I am from America. Kaulbach's remarks to his child, when he first came up to me, were quite playful; he said: "See, here is a painter. How fine it must be when one loves to sit down in the shade to paint all day! It must be *very* pleasant, I think. He has already painted a tree. How very busy he is, too!" These are his words, as nearly as I can translate them. In German they have enough of earnestness to please a child, and enough of truth to tickle me all over. I slept sweetly that night, after having thus received unsolicited praise from the greatest man in Germany. Should I ever have any conversation with Kaulbach, I would like to remind him of this little visit he paid me in the English Garden.

C. S.

A competent analyst of French art in the *Revue Ger-*

*manique*, furnishes some noteworthy opinions on that subject. "Every time I hear the French school of art mentioned," says the writer, "doubts come into my mind as to whether there is a French School in the usual acceptation of the word. France has had many eminent painters, but none who have transmitted their aims as a noble heritage to pupils who have in their turn become masters; the traditions of the schools of Italy, Spain and Holland furnish instances of the sort, but France none. The antecedents of French art are to be found in Italy, visible through the veil of the Renaissance. The true type of the French artist is to be found in painters like Watteau, Boucher, Lancret, who simply embodied a sentiment of gallantry, translating it for us in the conventional forms and phantasies of pastoral life. There is, however, a certain unity apparent in works of French art which is due to French genius; they are conspicuous for elegance, taste and mastery of the idea presented. This is particularly striking in works produced anterior to the inauguration of the romantic school, which school belongs to the present generation. It is to the romantic school we are indebted for exaggeration and violence, qualities in art that may have added to the resources of expression, but which are poor compensation for the precious qualities of harmony and propriety. Certain pictures of the present day seem to be intended for no other purpose than to force themselves upon the eye like literary works by authors who are determined to have them read at any cost; they are painted more to astonish than to win, to surprise rather than to charm the observer. Most of our exhibitions are public places where every one beats his own drum, striving to crown his neighbors' efforts in the hope of gaining the ears—somewhat long—of the attendant crowd. Painting, like literature, has got to be blustering." Continuing his analysis of French artistic power, the writer says that "elegance is too often but a mask for the absence of healthy conceptions; it fills its brush oftener with tinsel than with color, true color never flowing from conceit but directly from the artist's inspiration and the spirit of his composition." He recommends "distrust of the million. Art should master the crowd by beauty and thus control it instead of making pernicious sacrifices to it. Art need not be aristocratic or democratic, but simply art, the interpreter of everything that is human in the language of the beautiful."

French works of art are generally well executed; but there are so few worth the labor bestowed on them—like the representation of men and women eating, drinking, dressing and fighting, playing cards and chess, attitudinizing before mirrors and the like insignificant motives—and are becoming so numerous and bringing such enormous prices, it is time to scrutinize their pretensions and estimate their worth in the abstract. Such works at best are nothing but clever imitations of costumes and of petty graces, the very success of the artist doing more to degrade art than to elevate and strengthen its influence. A stranger's comments might be considered as proceeding from envious or jealous motives, but "*les Français jugés par eux-mêmes*" may be accepted as reliable authority.

\* It is very excellently done, and carefully handled.